

School Audit Executive Summary

Holmes Junior Senior High School

10/22/2006 – 10/27/2006

Raymond Finke, Principal

Introduction

The Kentucky Department of Education conducted a scholastic audit of Holmes Junior Senior High School during the period of 10/22/2006 - 10/27/2006. This school's last combined accountability index was 57.6 and its classification was Assistance Level 3. Here are the most relevant facts and next step recommendations from the audit.

School Deficiencies and Next Steps

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| 1. Deficiency | The school staff lacks sufficient cultural competency to effectively intervene with at risk students and students from diverse cultures. |
| Next Steps | School leadership should adopt policy and procedures to create a safe and nurturing culture and climate of success and acceptance. Clear academic and behavioral expectations should be communicated to all stakeholders, resulting in a code of behavior to be implemented and enforced by all staff. Ongoing, job embedded training should be provided to all staff in effective intervention strategies (mediation, conflict resolution and de-escalation strategies) to reduce confrontation between students and staff. School leadership should monitor implementation to ensure that all staff carry out their assigned responsibilities. The administration should hold accountable, through the evaluation process, any who fail to fulfill their assigned duties. |
| Current Status of Progress | Deficiency #1 has been partially implemented. The high school has secured the building by the installation of a secure keypad entry system and the locking of all other exterior doors. This past summer, both Malcolm Smith and Robert Barr were brought in to work with the teachers on effectively interacting and working with students of diverse backgrounds. District and school leadership should continue to monitor the implementation and impact this professional development is having on teaching and learning. The eighth grade teams have developed and utilized expectations and procedures for all eighth grade students. Each administrator is assigned to a specific list of teachers according to their academy. All new and targeted teachers attend CHAMPS training and follow-up support meetings throughout the school year. Communication about expectations is also provided through the department chair and staff meetings. |

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| 2. Deficiency | Behavioral expectations and interventions are not consistently communicated, enforced and monitored. |
| Next Steps | School leadership should act with urgency to adopt policy and procedures to implement a program that uses research based academic and behavioral standards to create a safe learning environment. People entering and exiting the facility, in the hallways and throughout the campus should be carefully and constantly monitored to ensure that no unsafe conditions exist. School leadership should explore methods such as additional strategically placed cameras, additional security training and a buzzer controlled entry system to allow a proactive approach to potentially dangerous situations rather than apprehending perpetrators of acts already committed. |
| Current Status of Progress | Deficiency #2 has been partially implemented. The high school utilizes the “Sweeps” method between classes to address tardiness, and the eighth grade teachers monitor students as they move from one class to the next on their own bell schedules. The high school has secured the building by the installation of a secure keypad entry system and the locking of all other exterior doors. The eighth grade teams have developed and utilized expectations and procedures for all eighth grade students. These teams meet regularly to share student concerns and ensure consistency across all classrooms, as well as communicate with parents. Administration shares discipline data with teachers periodically during academy meetings and communicates expectations for behavior to students via morning and afternoon announcements and through interactions in the cafeteria. |
| 3. Deficiency | Communication between and among administrators, staff, students and parents is not planned or systematic, resulting in unclear roles, responsibilities and expectations. |
| Next Steps | School leadership should design and fully implement a process to ensure that clear and timely communication occurs among appropriate stakeholders. The process should be designed to efficiently communicate clear expectations and the instructions necessary to understand and meet those expectations. Communication should be constantly monitored to ensure that it is effectively meeting the needs of everyone affected. |
| Current Status of Progress | Deficiency #3 has been partially implemented. The school has developed a leadership team involving teachers and administrators from each academy. The leadership team has analyzed school data, worked on the school improvement plan, and provided training to each academy using a train the trainer mode. Mr. Finke continues to meet with department chairs on a monthly basis to share |

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| | <p>information before departments meet as a group. Academies meet together on a monthly basis, as well. Because of the size of the building and high number of staff, delivering building-wide communication clearly continues to be a challenge at the high school. While eighth grade teams have common planning, there is little opportunity for high school teachers to meet collaboratively or plan common units and assessments. In addition, the inability to schedule students into pure academies is also a barrier to systematic and clear communication, as well as interventions for 10th, 11th and 12th graders.</p> |
| 4. Deficiency | The lack of monitoring, feedback, coaching and accountability of staff results in less than effective efforts to improve instructional strategies and to effectively implement school initiatives. |
| Next Steps | <p>School leadership should systematically monitor lesson plans and the quality of instruction. Meaningful feedback should be provided regarding curriculum content, instructional strategies, a variety of assessments, and differentiation of instruction. School leadership should also ensure that monitoring of the progress of all school initiatives is routine and effective. Accountability should follow the assignment of responsibility. Problems with instruction or with implementation of initiatives should be addressed immediately through appropriate support or interventions. Training, coaching, mentoring and collaboration should be integral components of the process.</p> |
| Current Status of Progress | <p>Deficiency #4 has been partially implemented.</p> <p>Monitoring of instructional strategies is in place through academy administrators and district leadership. The results have been used to assign instructional resources to support individual teachers. Individual administrators and HSEs have been assigned specific teachers to work with regarding classroom management and/or best practices for instruction, which was based on monitoring and walkthrough data.</p> <p>The ThinkLink assessment is being given. This has helped teachers to see which students are in need of additional help. Eighth grade math teachers are meeting and planning lessons and units together as a response to last year's KCCT scores. HSEs are currently meeting with district instructional leaders to improve and focus on open response questions. A systemic and tiered intervention process should be fully developed and implemented for students needing additional assistance.</p> |
| 5. Deficiency | The evaluation process is not effectively used to improve teacher and staff performance. |
| Next Steps | <p>The certified and classified evaluation process should be diligently administered by all evaluators. The principal should ensure that he and his assistants effectively use the process to support the improvement of</p> |

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| | instructional and organizational skills in all staff. He should ensure that formative and summative evaluations include effective and timely feedback, are conducted within required timelines and follow procedures in the evaluation plan. Individual growth plans should address both individual growth and school improvement plan needs and should be reviewed and revised as necessary. |
| Current Status of Progress | <p>Deficiency #5 has been partially implemented.</p> <p>The administration requires professional growth plans from teachers. Individual post-conferences are the responsibilities of the building administrators. It is unclear what impact these are having on improving student achievement. Additional documentation is needed to support assumption of full implementation and impact.</p> |

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| 6. Deficiency | Neither the school council nor the district has been effective in meeting their responsibilities for ensuring that all students achieve at high levels in any systematic manner. |
| Next Steps | The school, district and Kentucky Department of Education leadership should develop and include in their school and district improvement plans a comprehensive set of action steps for improving the leadership function in the school. These steps should include activities to allow school and district staff to identify the needs of school leadership, to provide training as needed, to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of leadership activities and to adjust as needed. It should provide for an interactive and collaborative relationship between school leadership and appropriate district staff that is proactive rather than only in reaction to requests for assistance. School leadership should monitor to determine whether its policies are understood and effectively implemented. |
| Current Status of Progress | <p>Deficiency #6 has been partially implemented.</p> <p>Through district and school leadership, a leadership team has been developed. This team is composed of administrators and teacher leaders representing each academy. The leadership team has analyzed school data, worked on the school improvement plan, and provided training to each academy using a train the trainer mode. The district walkthrough process also provides a means to identify and communicate instructional needs and areas for growth to school leadership.</p> <p>District leadership should fully monitor the implementation and effectiveness of school leadership activities and continue to provide assistance and guidance as needed.</p> |

Conclusion

In conclusion, significant steps have been taken to address the audit recommendations from last fall. The safety of students at the high school has been addressed through securing doors and insulating the eighth graders from the rest of the school. The teachers have worked to align and revise the curriculum maps and the walkthrough process provides a way to check on current progress in each classroom. The transition needs of the eighth grade students have been addressed through a teaming structure and common planning time. The creation of the leadership team has provided a way for administrators and teachers to communicate with each other concerning school improvement and analysis of student data.

A literacy committee was formed last year that developed a school-wide literacy plan for the next three years. Evidence based on the literacy plan should be collected to show impact on student learning in the areas of reading across the curriculum and writing to authentic audiences. Intervention strategies, such as Ramp-Up and Study Island, are beginning to be utilized this year at the eighth grade level. These strategies will result in targeting at least half of the eighth grade students through scheduled interventions on a

daily basis in reading or math. Furthermore, teachers are meeting in departments and utilizing ThinkLink results to identify students in need of additional instructional support. However, specific interventions for high school students are not occurring outside of the regular classroom and after-school ESS. Plans are being discussed, but nothing concrete has occurred as of December of 2007. The inability of scheduling students into pure academies is also a barrier to systematic and clear communication, as well as interventions for 10th, 11th and 12th graders.

In addition, plans need to begin to be made for successfully transitioning the current eighth graders to the ninth grade next fall. The most recent academic achievement data from the school's NCLB report shows that 60 to 70 percent of students are not currently prepared for the next academic level.